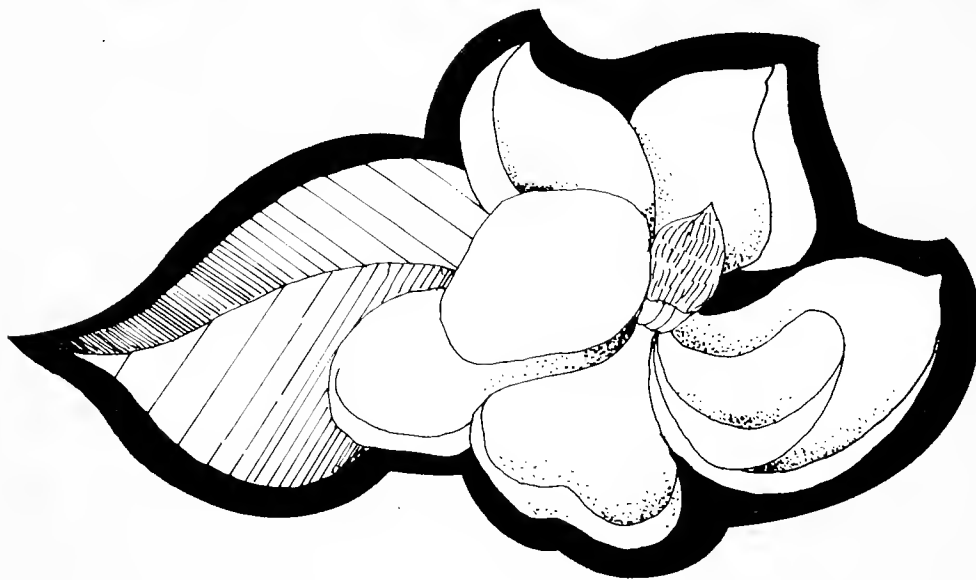


Delta Scene

One Dollar • Spring 1976



There's No Place Like Home.



It's not just mud and magnolias, but that special Southern charm that causes us to call the Mississippi Delta home. Four times a year you can have the unique opportunity to read about the people, places, problems and poetry that are familiar to us Deltans. Subscribe now to Delta Scene. Don't miss the issue that's just for you.

1 yr. \$3.50 ☐ 2 yrs. \$6.00 ☐ 3 yrs. \$10.00 ☐

name _____

address _____

city _____

state _____ zip _____

Delta Scene

Table of Contents
Spring 1976 Volume 3, No. 1

Editor: Curt Lamar
**Associate editor/Advertising
sales director:** Cindy Dixon
Art director: Jill Wasson Stowe
Staff artist: Mike DeBerry
Business manager: Cliff Whitt
Graphic Consultant: Delta Design
Group

Editorial Board:
William LaForge, chairman
Sammy Britt
Eugene Butts
William Cash
Leroy Morganti
U.S. Walker
O.F. White

Cover: Spring comes to the Delta.
Photo by Bob Lord.

- 6 Forum
by Curt Lamar
- 8 Vicksburg's Ft. Nogales: A Spanish Interlude in the Mississippi
Delta
by James Cyril O'Neill
- 11 The Delta Mosquito
- 12 Profile (Jerry Clower — not just joking)
by Rebecca Hood-Adams
- 14 GreenScene
by Cindy Dixon
- 15 Delta Plant Breeders Serve the World
- 16 Historic Architecture in the Delta
by Mary Wallace Crocker
- 20 Beavers and Beaver Dam Lake
by Charles S. Conner
- 22 Miss Luna's Private Ghost
by Ellen Orr
- 29 Gourmet Guide (the Venetian Cafe)
by Cindy Dixon

Delta Scene Magazine is published quarterly by Delta State University, Cleveland, MS 38732. Copyright by Delta State. All rights reserved. Opinions expressed by writers and artists are not necessarily those of the publisher. Permission to reprint material contained in this magazine must be obtained from Delta Scene, P.O. Box B-3, Cleveland, MS 38732. Telephone number for editorial and advertising offices: (601) 846-1976.

Contributors: Delta Scene welcomes quality work from established and new writers, photographers and artists. The magazine can assume no responsibility for loss of or damage to unsolicited material. Contributions will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and adequate postage.

Subscriptions: \$3.50 a year, \$1.00 a copy in USA. Change of address must be made six weeks in advance to insure uninterrupted service. Second class postage pending at Cleveland, MS 38732.

Delta Scene is an equal opportunity employer.



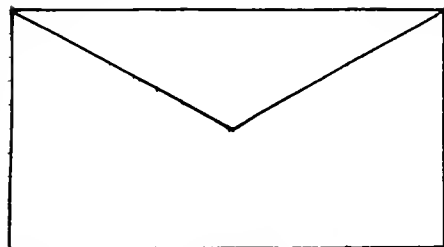
JUMP INTO SPRING!

With spring just around the corner, it's time to give your present car a good once-over. Will it make it on another long vacation? If the answer is "no," head on down to Kossman's. Settle in behind the wheel of a Cadillac, Pontiac, Buick, GMC Truck or Jeep and prepare yourself for a new experience in driving comfort, luxury and performance. Now two great locations to serve you. Both have most makes, colors and models in stock for immediate delivery.

A Delta Tradition

KOSSMAN'S, INC.
Hwy. 61 South
Cleveland, MS
Pontiac, Buick, GMC
Cadillac, Jeep

CHESTER KOSSMAN, INC.
Hwy. 49 South
Clarksdale, MS
Pontiac, Buick, GMC



to the Editor:

I am enclosing a check for a subscription to DELTA SCENE. I would also like to purchase three or four back copies if available.

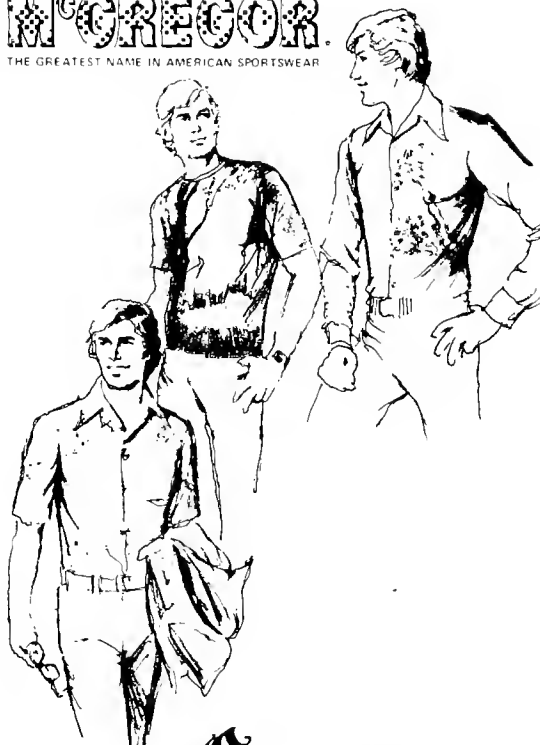
Several years ago we lived in Cleveland and I am looking forward to receiving the publication.

Elizabeth M. Temple
Gulfport, MS

Back issues of DELTA SCENE are available for 50c each. At the moment copies of all issues are available. The supply, of course, is limited.

McGREGOR

THE GREATEST NAME IN AMERICAN SPORTSWEAR



**A POSITIVE WAY
OF DRESSING.**

Style and comfort
that you can easily
become accustomed to.

Breeze through
spring and summer
wearing McGregor
sports shirts.

Shankerman's

228 Yazoo

• Clarksdale

Come now to New Orleans



Enter the French Quarter lifestyle—your room will be an adventure in gracious living; overlooking a secluded patio where a sparkling swimming pool beckons.

Stay in the French Quarter

Exquisitely furnished rooms and suites—king and queen sized beds, color TV, complimentary newspapers at your door, free local phone calls, free enclosed parking, complimentary Continental Breakfast. Home of the famous Bagnio Lounge, the Quarters new "inn" place. Surrounded by world famous sights and sounds— or for business trips, financial/business district is nearby.

Experience the true flavor of New Orleans—live it—in the intimate, unique Dauphine Orleans.

Advance reservations suggested.

For reservations, dial:
800/AE8-5000 (toll free)



All this and more
at the

**DAUPHINE
ORLEANS
MOTOR HOTEL**
415 Dauphine St.
NEW ORLEANS
LOUISIANA 70112

We're on our way!
Please send brochure and rate card!

Dept. LC

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE, ZIP _____

it's the
real thing



**Coca-Cola Bottling
of Clarksdale
320 Anderson Blvd.**

FORUM

by Curt Lamar

Having lived in the Delta for nearly a decade, I'm frequently asked by Mississippians not from this area, as well as by out-of-staters, what exactly is "the Delta"? It's not an easy question to answer, particularly by someone from the "hills" who has adopted the Delta as his permanent home.

A native Deltan wouldn't have much trouble answering a query such as this, since the Delta is all he's ever known (or cares to know). Consequently, this area might not seem so unique in that he doesn't really have anything with which to compare it. But for me, an "outsider" who lived in the rolling hills and dales of south-western Mississippi until age eighteen, the Delta's uniqueness is incomparable.

Indeed, what is the Delta? In the winter, it's without doubt the most somber, dull-looking place imaginable—a panorama of grays,

blacks, and browns, where a wet bone-chilling, cutting wind seems ever-present. But then comes spring in the Delta, and everywhere is seen the miracle of Nature's rebirth. The Delta becomes a profusion of greens and yellows, of purples and blues. And the spring sky in the Delta seems bluer than blue. There is water, water everywhere, and plowing, and sonorous statements that "tornado watch number so-and-so" is in effect. Summer in the Delta is the epitome of Deep South easy living, at least that's the way it seems. It's hot, oh so hot. And life in the Delta is much like the languid bayous that criss-cross it. Fall. Fall in the Delta brings shorter, crisper days, with smoke in the air from burn-offs, with brilliant oranges, golds, and reds in the hardwood tree stands. Most of all, the Delta in the fall is the scene of the most glorious sunsets conceivable.

But is all this really "the Delta"? Actually, and most important, the Delta is its people. All kinds of people. But people with one thing in common — friendliness, a concern for their fellowmen. This, then, is really the Delta, which makes all those other things more enjoyable, or, as the case may be, tolerable.

When Delta State University decided to publish DELTA SCENE MAGAZINE, it did so for a specific reason. It wanted DELTA SCENE to serve the people of the Delta by capturing the essence of this area's uniqueness, to portray the Delta's history, literature, art, economics, and even idiosyncrasies. As the University stated, it "believes that this project is a legitimate function of an institution of higher learning in its role of service to the community through broad dissemination of knowledge and understanding of itself."

As editor of DELTA SCENE MAGAZINE, and as one who has come to love this Delta with a passion I cannot explain, my response to the University's pledge is simply "so be it!"

Curt Lamar is an Associate Professor of History at Delta State University and is editor of DELTA SCENE MAGAZINE.

WELLS DISTRIBUTING COMPANY

P. O. BOX 697
CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI 38732



Cleveland Ford Tractor, Inc.

Hwy. 61 North,
Cleveland, MS 38732
(601) 843-4246

Where Ford blue
is the growing thing.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 27-April 11** Vicksburg Vintage, 1976 pilgrimage. 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily for all homes. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon for St. Francis Xavier Convent. Package price, adults—\$6.25, children—\$1.25.
- April 1-4** Greenwood Arts Festival. John Miller photography exhibit. March 28-April 3, Whittington Playhouse. Marvin Hamlisch, April 1, Greenwood High School. Ray McKinely and the Glenn Miller Orchestra, April 2, Greenwood High School. Jose Feliciano, April 3, Greenwood High School. Outdoor Jazz Concert, April 4, City Park.
- April 5** Greenville Symphony Orchestra. Bicentennial Festival of American Music, free admission. City Wharf of Lake Ferguson. Greenville High Auditorium in case of rain.
- April 8-10** Yogi Bear and Troupe, Greenville Mall. Three shows daily, 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.
- April 10** Fourth annual Arts and Crafts Fair. Downtown Leland from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Wide variety of handmade art and craft items for browsing or buying. Sponsored jointly by the Chamber of Commerce and the Leland Newcomers' Club.
- April 10** CrossTie Arts Festival. Cleveland, courthouse lawn. Arts and crafts. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
- April 24** Yellow Dog Festival. Flea market, art sale, country store, and live music band. Moorhead.
- April 24** Seven Flags over Mississippi, flower show. Garden Club Council, Greenville. Greenville Mall Civic Center.
- April 24** Vicksburg Flea Market. Courthouse Square of Old and New Courthouses, 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Arts, crafts, and antiques along with plants from local greenhouses and tasty morsels from country kitchens.
- May 6-June 11** Touring Exhibitions. Models of machines and devices built according to the technical and scientific sketches and notes of Leonardo da Vinci. Some may be operated. Accompanied by enlarged reproductions of sketches. Displayed at Hernando's First Regional Library.
- May 8** Mainstream Arts and Crafts Festival. Courthouse lawn, Greenville, 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Display and sale of arts and crafts with exhibitors from several states.
- May 8** Gateway to the Delta Arts and Crafts Festival. Visiting performers, seminars, plays and exhibitions. Yazoo City.
- May 15** A Fair in Hernando. Flea market featuring a wide variety of amateur and professional artwork, antiques, etc. All crafts displayed or sold are handcrafted, finished products. Located on the Square in downtown Hernando.
- June 3-5** Friendly Swim Meet. Greenwood.
- June 21-July 4** Patriotic Fortnight. Greenwood.

Additional information on most events and confirmation of times, dates and prices can be obtained from the Chamber of Commerce in most of the towns mentioned.

Vicksburg's Fort Nogales

A SPANISH INTERLUDE IN
THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA
by James Cyril O'Neill

The establishment in 1791 of a Spanish fort at what is now Vicksburg was the climax of a long period of international conflict along the lower Mississippi River. Since Hernando de Soto's discovery of the Mississippi River in 1541, there had been the coming and going of many Europeans along its banks, with resulting tensions, crises, and clashes. Spain had ignored the lower Mississippi Valley after de Soto's expedition. Then, due to the exploits of such adventurers as Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, and Jean Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this area fell under French control, which lasted until 1763.

In 1763, with the conclusion of the international conflict known as the Seven Years' War primarily between France and Great Britain,

the lower Mississippi region was given to the victorious British, although there was little done to develop this part of British North America. In 1775, with the explosion of the American Revolutionary War and its consequences, the British were destined to lose the area. However, by 1781 the newly-created United States was unable to lay strong claim to this southwestern edge of its territory, and at this juncture Spain attempted a diplomatic maneuver of some significance.

As a lukewarm ally of the rebellious American colonies, Spain in 1781 seized British West Florida, a territory bounded by the Chattahoochee River in the east, by the Gulf of Mexico in the south, by the Mississippi River in the west, and by the 31st parallel in the north. In 1783 Spain claimed that West Florida's northern boundary was actually the vicinity

around the 32nd parallel, although the United States contended that this boundary should be the 31st parallel.

With Spain now controlling the Mississippi River from New Orleans in the south theoretically to the Canadian border in the north, and with a boundary quarrel possible, tensions between the Spanish and the United States governments increased. Much of this tension was based on a number of treaty agreements which had occurred between 1763 and 1783.

At the end of the Seven Years' War, known as the French and Indian Wars in North America, France had ceded the city of New Orleans to Spain; also, the French had given Spain all of their territory northward from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, and west of the Mississippi River. Twenty years later, at the conclusion of the



reproduction of map by Mike DeBerry

American Revolutionary War, Great Britain negotiated separate treaties with Spain and with the United States. In these respective treaties, the United States was given all lands on the east bank of the Mississippi River from the Canadian boundary southward to the 31st parallel. Spain was given all of East Florida and all of British West Florida up to the 31st parallel. But there immediately developed the aforementioned dispute relative to the northern terminus of British West Florida.

The crux of the matter in this diplomatic squabbling was the 1783 status of the former French district known as Old Natchez. In 1763, when the British created West Florida, Old Natchez, stretching from the Yazoo River southward to the 31st parallel just below the town of Natchez, was not included. However, in 1764 the British reassessed their deci-

sion and included the Old Natchez territory in West Florida. It was the United States' contention in 1783 that Great Britain's original decision, which had excluded Old Natchez from West Florida was the binding one; thus, the Old Natchez area would become United States territory. Understandably, Spain opposed the United States contention, claiming territory up to the Yazoo River.

After six years of diplomatic bombast, Spain decided forcefully to hold Old Natchez. The man appointed to oversee this effort was Manuel Gayoso de Lemas, who became governor of the Natchez area in June 1789. The Spanish Crown had learned that the United States government planned to promote a vigorous settlement push in the disputed Old Natchez area. Consequently, Gayoso was ordered to erect a fort

at a prominent point on the Mississippi River in the Old Natchez region. He selected a site known to the Indians as Nan-a-cha-ha and to River adventurers as Walnut Hills.

This location was one of the most beautiful and picturesque in the entire Mississippi River Valley. Moreover, Walnut Hills had been fashioned by Nature into an impressive defense perimeter. It was protected on three sides by small hills that gradually sloped to the northeast to a height of about 270 feet (this summit would later be called "Fort Hill"). A freshwater stream flowed down from the hills through the site, emptying into the Mississippi. From the summit of Walnut Hills there was a magnificent panorama of the River itself. The famous "S" turn was clearly visible, revealing the River's change of course from due south to due north along the Louisiana

peninsula, and the reversal south again toward the Gulf of Mexico. The entire area was thick in walnut trees, hence its designation by seventeenth-century travelers on the River.

Governor Gayoso was quite impressed with the site, writing to his superiors that "Walnut Hills has the advantage of being the first high land . . . on the east bank of the Mississippi River." He noted that a town could be easily constructed nearby, with good ship anchorage. Moreover, he observed that "I know there are many persons in America who have their eyes on it" and that it "is coveted by the Americans." Indeed, the Spanish fort to be erected here, known as Fort Nogales ("los nogales" is Spanish for walnut trees), would be an important factor in Spain's plan to dominate the Mississippi River and to force concessions from the United States, which desperately needed a passageway to the Gulf, that is, the Mississippi River, for its western states.

The Spanish master plan was to construct a series of forts on the River from St. Louis in the north to New Orleans in the south. The locations eventually selected were on the west bank at New Madrid (Missouri) and at Chickasaw Bluffs (Memphis), and on the east bank at Walnut Hills, at Natchez, at Baton Rouge, and at Manchac. Of these, Fort Nogales at Walnut Hills was early considered the most strategic. Also, the Spanish Crown created the famous "Mississippi Squadron" to patrol the River and to aid the forts. This naval force had a complement of 300 men and consisted of six galleys, four galiots, one bombadier, six cannon launches, and an extra large galley mounted with an eighteen-pounder cannon in the prow and with ten swivel guns on each side.

Soon after he ordered that a fort be constructed at Walnut Hills, Gayoso attached part of the "Mississippi Squadron" to the Natchez District for exclusive use in that sector. Included in this force were two galleys, three cannon launches, plus one armed galiot for his personal use. The

stationing of this force at Fort Nogales reemphasized the strategic importance attached by the Spanish Crown to this site. In fact, in his correspondence Gayoso stressed the critical location of the Fort as one of the "keys to the Mississippi River."

Gayoso's enthusiasm for Fort Nogales' importance was understandable, for the natural defenses at Walnut Hills, coupled with good anchorage and the hair-pin curves in the River, made it a very strong position for the Spaniards. Its location was also significant for other reasons. Built in the extreme northern portion of Spain's territory on the east bank of the Mississippi River, Fort Nogales would become the "tally point" at which passports had to be declared or a new passport secured in order to go downstream to Natchez and New Orleans. Thus, the River's traffic was to be controlled from this point, and ultimately the Spanish Crown successfully stymied any southward expansion by the United States until 1795.

In addition to controlling the River, Fort Nogales played a significant part in the Spanish effort to persuade settlers in the area to become subjects of the Crown of Spain. Gayoso indicated to his subordinates that he wanted to induce more immigrants to settle in and around Nogales: "If the passengers of any boat desires (sic) to settle permanently around Nogales admit them, allot them a place in the town at once and aid them to establish living quarters. Let them erect a house, although it be a very indifferent one. Grant them land for working according to the general rule laid down for land grants to settlers." The governor further stressed that all prospective settlers should be exposed to the beauty of Walnut Hills and informed of how fertile the land around the area was. A cypress swamp in the vicinity could be utilized for dwelling construction, but there was to be no "needless destruction of trees."

As soldiers arrived in April 1791 to begin the actual construction of the fort, Gayoso was confronted

with his first major crisis as governor. Indians in the area vigorously objected to the fort's construction, for it was in the midst of their best hunting grounds. Moreover, they let it be known that the British extension of West Florida to the Yazoo River had been with their permission, and that the British had promised them payment for their lands involved. Consequently, Gayoso initiated a series of discussions with the Choctaws, with his capable adjutant, Stephen Minor, presenting the Spanish case. The result of these negotiations during March and April 1792 was the Treaty of Natchez, which was finalized in May 1792. By virtue of this agreement, the Spaniards gave a number of guarantees and concessions to the Indians relative to friendship, protection, and supplies. In return, a serious Indian threat was negated by Gayoso.

After the Treaty of Natchez was signed, the construction of Fort Nogales was continued, and it was completed in the early summer of 1792. The fortification consisted of three forts and two block-houses, or lunettes. The two main forts were about 1200 feet from the River; the third fort was built on the hill top, which is now Fort Hill. The forts were isolated, since no haciendas, or estates, could be developed within a league of them.

Once Fort Nogales was operational, Gayoso issued a series of regulations to the soldiers who manned it. Indians were to be kept away from the Fort at all times, and strangers, red or white, were not allowed within the fortress area. In particular were the Indians kept under surveillance, for they were difficult to control at all times, despite the Treaty of Natchez. The inhabitants of Los Nogales, the small civilian settlement adjacent to the Fort, were not to be bothered by the soldiers in Fort Nogales. As Gayoso instructed, the soldiers were never " . . . to quarrel with the settlers." Any soldier who disobeyed Gayoso's edicts was sent to district
Continued on page 28

the Delta Mosquito

That buzz, that monotonous drone, is unmistakable. Indeed, with the coming of spring in the Mississippi Delta, the mosquito makes its annual debut *en masse*. Certainly this is not news to Deltans, but in the past several years the mosquito's "coming out" has taken on a new, and rather frightening, significance. With the encephalitis epidemic of last year, and the outbreak being predicted for this year, people are paying a lot more attention to this five-sixteenth-inch-long creature, this "little fly" as the early Spaniards in Mississippi called it (mosquito is the diminutive of the Spanish word for fly, "mosca").

The mosquito is a rather remarkable creature, not to say a tenacious one. According to Dr. Johnny Ouzts, a noted Delta entomologist and Chairman of the Biology Department at Delta State University, mosquitoes which feast on man and other warm-blooded creatures have three common characteristics: they must have water for completion of immature stage development, females must have a blood meal before they can produce viable eggs, and males of all species do not feed on blood but on the pollen and nectar of flowering plants.

Throughout the Delta area, there are twenty-seven different species which make up the mosquito population. These various species in turn are divided into two groups — flood water breeders and permanent, or standing, water breeders. As the designations indicate, flood water breeders are those mosquitoes which deposit their eggs on moist soil so that a flood of water will hatch them. Permanent water breeders deposit their eggs on the surface of standing water, with the hatching process then taking place.

Dr. Ouzts noted that although the flood water breeding mos-

quito, often called the "rice field mosquito," constitutes by far the largest mosquito population in the Delta (up to 95 per cent), it is the permanent water breeder that affords the greatest danger to man, for among these mosquitoes is found the dreaded *culex* species, which transmits virulent St. Louis encephalitis. Unlike its more prolific flood water breeding cousins, the permanent water breeder does not have a very expansive flight range, usually about two miles maximum as compared with seven miles in the case of the flood water breeder. This is because the permanent water breeder stays as close to human beings and other animals as possible, that is, close to its food source.

The female permanent water mosquito lays from 100 to 300 eggs on the surface of standing water, which means anything from roadside ditches and bayous to old water-filled tires, tree stumps, or just plain water-filled depressions in the earth. Development to the immature stage normally occurs within fourteen days. Then these pests are ready to feed, and to transmit encephalitis.

Known as the "singing mosquito," *culex* may be found almost anyplace around the home where water stands for a lengthy time. During the winter months, these creatures stay in basements, cracks in buildings, under houses, or any other place protected from low outside temperatures. For this reason they may suddenly appear even in the winter when there are periods of unseasonable warmth. But the spring and summer are really their busy times, and with their less dangerous but highly irritating flood water cousins, they can make life rather uncomfortable in the Delta.

Is there any way the layman can know if he is being pursued and/or bitten by the singing mosquito? Dr. Ouzts observed that *culex*, which he has found in vases containing philodendrons and in containers for growing sweet potatoes, bites from late in the afternoon until before midnight and from after two in the morning until dawn. Since these are times

of deep sleep for human beings, *culex's* threat is even more ominous. Other than this characteristic, the singing mosquito is hard to distinguish from other varieties, although it is a bit smaller than its rice field cousins.

Yes, the Delta, with its vast expanses of water, is a haven for these various species of mosquitoes, which have been here since there was a "Delta." And, more than likely, they will be with us for many years to come. Thus, in view of the encephalitis problem, mosquito control measures are quite important. Dr. Ouzts indicated that contrary to popular public opinion, the thermol aerosol of the "fogging machine" is a very effective device to control adult mosquito populations, provided it is operated properly. Also, the Mississippi Board of Health has urged that ten steps be followed to reduce chances of contracting encephalitis:

- empty and turn upside down or throw away if possible any container on your property that holds water;

- spray or treat mosquito breeding areas with diesel fuel or used motor oil if possible (privies, stagnant sewage, wastewater drains, culverts, or any area with standing water);

- cover rain barrels, tanks, and cisterns with screens;

- repair or replace damaged screens on doors and windows;

- cover openings in floors, walls, and doors;

- keep grass and weeds cut;

- make sure garbage cans are tightly covered;

- wear protective clothing outside in the late afternoon and night;

- use insect repellent before going outdoors in the late afternoon and night;

- stay indoors at night whenever possible.

By following these tips, people should be able to reduce the danger of encephalitis epidemics noticeably. Then, without fear or dread, they can turn to their great love during the spring and summer — playing and working outdoors in that most unique of areas in Mississippi, the Delta.

Profile: Jerry Clower

by Rebecca Hood-Adams

Ole Jay-ree kinda' sucks you up into the corner of his smile, a tight fit sometimes, but it's as warm and cozy as a cheek-full of Bull Durham.

"Naw, I never know just what I'm gonna' say, til I get out on stage and says it."

He cranes his head out the pick-up window and gawks like a tourist at the old Ryman Auditorium, for many years the home of the Grand Ole Opry.

"I get the feel of the audience and try to tell 'em what they come to hear. But I never know ahead of time."

One finds it hard to believe that this master showman doesn't rehearse.

"Course now sometimes I try out new ideas for a story on my friends."

And he swings into one of his famous tales. It's an emotional story of bad weather, death, and gospel music. Jerry sets the stage so you live the tale with him. Very effective.

And he says he never rehearses.

Clower was the keynote speaker at the International Gospel Music Seminar last fall and he told them the same tale he had told me. The room was packed with dee-jays, guys knee-deep in the business. No imitation brand will fool them. Jerry steps up to the mike and warms 'em up to the time he saw his first tragedy, a tornado in Amite County, Mississippi.

"Nothing was left," Jerry says, "All the funeral homes was slap full of dead people. Ain't no way to describe how folks was feeling. And then from out of the silence, a far-off voice was heard . . ."

He's got the dee-jays in the palm of his hand now. I lay back and wait for the tears.

"A fellow was sitting on a bale of cotton that had been blowed from the compress and deposited

where his house used to be . . ."

His gestures get broader and the crowd strains to catch every word.

"Then we heard a faint voice that fell ta' singin',

'I'm on my way to that fair land
Where the soul never dies,

And there will be no parting place

Where the soul never dies.' "

Jerry's voice is whispery, grveled, even trembling now as he sings.

"And then a lady come up and she kinda smiles through her tears. She got to thinkin' about that there verse of that gospel music and she sings.

'A rose is bloomin' there for me
Where the soul never dies

And there I'll spend eternity

Where the soul never dies.' "

"Amen" comes from the audience and I turn to watch a room full of side-burned professionals who make their living playing gospel music. They're mesmerized. Ole Jay-ree don't slack up none either.

"And then about ten folks gather round. One of 'em was a Black cat who commences to keep time."

Clower slaps his thigh in time with the next verse.

"No sad farwell,

There'll be no tear-dimmed eyes,

And all is well,

Where the soul never dies."

"You see now, the first tragedy I ever saw, the only thing what perked 'em up was a gospel song."

The audience is wrung out, too emotionally stunned to even applaud for a moment. And then the shouts and hand-clapping break out. Grown men pull out their handkerchiefs. I've got goosebumps and I'd heard the story before.

When Jerry Clower tells them later, "I'm on your side," there's no doubting about it.

Maybe "being on your side" is part of what's made Jerry Clower such a phenomenal success. His stories of the coon hunt or Marcel Ledbetter's talkin' chain saw spell home to millions of Americans.

"Country's the same whether it's Yazoo City, Mississippi, or Topeka, Kansas," says the man who's sold over four million "country" records in as many years.

"I'm a humorist, not a comic. I don't tell funny stories, I tell stories funny."

And funny they are. Gut-clutchin', foot-stompin', eye-waterin' funny.

It's not the punchline—often there isn't one. But watch him hustle on stage at the Opry and the crowd roars. "Knock him out, John," he bellows, his \$450 yellow suit a dazzlin' in the spotlights.

The audience screams at the first glimpse of what he calls a "275 pound canary in a ruffled shirt."

He doesn't even have to tell a story, just mention that he saw old Marcel Ledbetter the other day, and they're laid out in the aisles. He rattles off the names of the Ledbetter brothers and sisters—Ardel, Bernel, Raynell, Lynell, W.L., Odell, and Marcel—and they're clutching their sides and gasping between giggles. They know what comes next.

Invariably after a performance, the crowds swarm over him, to touch him, thank him, laugh with him.

"It reminds me of a story 'bout my Uncle Clayton," one man prods. "Heck, I'll give it to you if you want it. See, there was this time . . ."

Jerry reminds people of their roots. As country music star Roy Clark said about Clower, "He brought back some memories that I cherish, but I was about to forget them."

Jerry Clower shares his own special brand of humor with the audience. And they love him for it, as record sales prove. Four albums, four million copies, all in four years. That's a powerful lot of sharin' goin' on.

Twice voted the Country Comic of the Year by Billboard Magazine, Jerry Clower's career has skyrocketed since the days when he was Mississippi Chemical Corporation's top fertilizer salesman. A little over four years ago he was supervising 33 salesmen who sold \$90 million worth of fertilizer. Today he is a "star," knocking down a heap of change—a-tellin' them same stories he'd been a-tellin' free for years.

And there's no stopping it all. Recently his new album, "Live in Picayune" came out. He's signed to do "one of them Hollywood

move-vees with Roy Rogers. His autobiography **Ain't God Good?**, now in its third printing, is sweeping the county.

Pick-up trucks and freeway flyin' Cadillacs tout "Clower Power" from their bumpers. Old Jay-ree grins off the front of a barefoot kid's tee-shirt in West Tennessee. And at a southern university, an English professor explains "colloquialism" in terms of "Clowerism."

All this hoopla is about a good ole boy who used to listen to the Grand Ole Opry on a "bat-tree rad-deo" that was dead most of the time.

"We figured out that if you could set the bat-tree down in front of the fireplace and then run poke it in the rad-deo, the rad-deo would play as long as the bat-tree was hot. And ever Saturday nite, we'd go to whoever's house had the strongest bat-tree in their rad-deo."

The amazing truth of the matter is that the first time Jerry Clower ever saw the Grand Ole Opry live, he performed on stage.

"I backed into show business," Jerry confesses. "Sometimes I kinda have to shake my head a mite to believe it's all real."

In fact, the spotlights and adoring crowds are still so new to Jerry that when they laid his star in the walkway in front of the Country Music Hall of Fame, he

didn't bring any of his family along for the ceremony.

"Tandy Rice, my agent, just tole me to show up. I never had no idea what it was all about 'til they start up this fancy shindig."

What's triggered the success of this man the critics call "the Will Rogers of our generation?" Ask Jerry and he'll tell you God, "the main most one," done it.

Don't count the fact that he's funny and works like a plow mule to keep the audience howlin'. Forget that he's got an agent that could sell a truckload of tape recorders to the Republican Party. Don't even mention the possibility that Jerry came along at a time when people were returning to the values of their youth after the turbulent 60's.

No sir, God done it.

"I've done give up my hang-ups

to the One what was hung-up on the Cross of Calvary," he tells the crowd at a recent Billy Graham Crusade.

Jerry never misses an opportunity to tell the story of his baptism in the east fork of the Amite River along with a little yellow-headed gal who later became his wife.

He backs it up when he talks about the Lord. Jerry doesn't drink or smoke and "never went out once with a woman other than my wife." Not only does he tithe regularly at the First Baptist Church in Yazoo, but he open-arm welcomes every opportunity to help somebody out.

A Mississippi Chemical Corporation employee says, "Jerry's no different than ten years ago. If you admired his tie back then, he'd jerk it off and lend it to you."



Continued on page 27

Green Scene

by Cindy Dixon

Indoor plants once seemed the exclusive property of little old ladies and Garden Club members. Oh, you might have a dusty philodendron over in a corner somewhere, but that was about it. Then suddenly houseplants were everywhere. Plant stores were flourishing, and dying, on every street corner. It wasn't exactly the greening of America Charles Reich had written about, but a greening of a different type.

Why did the out-of-doors suddenly begin to move indoors? No one can really say and it doesn't matter much anyway. The fact remains that the houseplant, once forgotten, for a while a fad, now seems to be with us to stay as a legitimate part of our interior design.

Of course, there's a lot of difference between your prize Areca palm and your bentwood rocker. The palm can die from a number of causes. The chair can only be beaten to death. This lack of immortality in plants disturbs a lot of people. And with good reason, especially when you consider the price of some of those pretty little green plants. But what can you do to keep your live greenery live? Mostly just use a little common sense.

Many of the plant books I've purchased haven't helped much. In fact, sometimes I think the biggest threat to indoor plants today is the plant book. Often they seem to muddle the issue rather than to clarify matters.

All I want are simple facts and help for my plants that is feasible. I really can't see lugging a 40-pound rubber plant (weight includes large pot and dirt) to the shower to bathe with me every Saturday night, although I'm sure the plant would appreciate it. Nor am I about to get up two hours early every morning to mist the

little darlings before I leave for work. I'm not grooming my plants for the Garden Club Show, I just want them to live!

And, if that's what you're interested in, this column is dedicated to you. Please don't expect a lot of Latin terms or a detailed study of photosynthesis and germination. I won't even suggest that you turn your guest room into a greenhouse complete with sprinklers and humidifiers. I simply want to share some of the lessons I've learned with you, lessons that were often taught at the expense of a plant or two. I don't claim to be an expert or to have a fool-proof method. I'll just let you know what has worked for me and hope that it will work for you.

The first plant I want to recommend to you is one that two very knowledgeable plant people, syndicated columnists Lynn and Joel Rapp, say is not suitable as an indoor plant — the begonia. I'm not sure what Lynn and Joel have been doing to their begonias, but I have enough friends with houses full of this gorgeous blooming plant to feel confident in recommending it to you.

As far as I'm concerned, the wax begonia is about as close to the perfect house plant as you'll ever find. It has rich green leaves. It blooms all year long and comes in a variety of colors from deep, deep red to white. It grows rapidly and multiplies almost as fast.

All you need to do to root a begonia is to break off a healthy limb, put it in water until roots form, then pot it. You can simply break a limb off and put it in the dirt if the first method sounds like too much trouble. The "straight to the dirt" method usually works best for hairy-stemmed begonias that have a tendency to rot rather than root when left in water for a long period of time.

Water seems to be the begonia's worst enemy, at least an oversupply of it. I've never had any problems with bugs or disease but have lost a few plants to root rot caused by poor drainage and over-enthusiasm on my part. Herein, however, lies one of the strengths of the begonia. When

the plant looks sick, break off the healthiest limb, root it and toss the diseased plant out the door.

The sun, like water, is the begonia's worst enemy as well as its best friend. Begonias need a good bit of sun to obtain their richest colors, yet direct sun over a period of several hours can be fatal. If you plan to put your begonias outside in the summer, make sure they are in a lightly shaded spot. And, of course, the more sun, the more water the plants will need.

A very agreeable plant, a begonia will live stuck in a pot in a well-lit, but forgotten, corner of your home. It's a plant that can, and should, be used to a much better advantage. Tubular begonias are perfect for hanging baskets. Be sure not to plant them in your favorite basket, however, because the masses of flowers and leaves will probably completely cover the basket by the end of the summer. When the plants die down in the fall, dry the tubers and store them until the following spring.

Begonias are also ideal for outdoor planters and window boxes. The plants will grow all spring and summer. When the weather begins to turn cold, just bring a few cuttings inside. Take care of the cuttings through the winter and you'll have enough flowers to start all over again when spring rolls around. This eliminates the problem of what to do with a windowbox full of flowers during the winter months.

The begonia is a perfect plant for young children and people who can't seem to get anything to grow as well as those with a green thumb.

In the next Delta Scene, I'll discuss a plant with a reputation for being difficult to grow — the African violet.

Cindy Dixon is associate editor and advertising sales director of DELTA SCENE MAGAZINE. Prior to joining the DELTA SCENE staff, she was editor of PRO BASS MAGAZINE, published in Memphis, Tennessee. She received her B.A. degree in English and journalism at the University of Mississippi, where she was women's editor of the student newspaper, "The Daily Mississippian."

Delta Plant Breeders Serve the World



by Early C. Ewing, Jr.

This is an age of technology. Men have been put on the moon. Dread diseases have been eliminated. Monday night football comes into our living rooms in color. None of this would be possible without the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. An abundance of these things has enabled this country to make many other advances. Astronauts, for example, could not have gone to the moon without breakfast.

Our abundance of food and natural fibers is the result of the work of America's farmers. Crop production in turn depends on the constant development of improved varieties of such fibers. The Mississippi Delta is the site of three plant-breeding firms, the activities of which have histori-

cally been concentrated primarily on cotton breeding, but which now include research on soybeans, wheat, and sorghum as well. These firms are Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company in Tunica, Delta and Pine Land Company in Scott, and Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company in Stoneville. With the exception of only a few countries, cotton varieties developed by these companies are grown throughout the world—in Australia, Bolivia, Colombia, Spain, Syria, South Africa, Mexico, and the Central American area, to name several. These same cotton varieties are also prevalent across the United States cotton belt from the Carolinas to California. Varieties developed in the Delta seem to have characteristics which enable

them to have world-wide adaptation.

Cotton variety development is only one phase of the plant-breeding industry. The South's soybean production is based on varieties developed by Dr. Edgar Hartwig at the Delta Branch Experiment Station. Most of the world's major crops depend on the increased production of new varieties developed by plant breeders such as Dr. Hartwig. Examples are wheat, corn, alfalfa, vegetables, and forage grasses. Even trees are being improved by plant breeders. Most people are familiar with juicier tomatoes, tastier fruit, sweeter corn, and stringless string beans. Plant breeders have created these more attractive products, but our distribution system must also be given credit for getting them to us in such appealing condition throughout the year. Increased yields and better quality developed by plant breeders enable U.S. consumers to spend a lower percentage of their income for food than is the case for citizens in any other part of the world. Plant breeders accomplish these "miracles" the way most such miracles are wrought, through intelligent planning, hard work, a skill at and a feel for the job, as well as a certain amount of luck.

All crops are improved by the application of certain basic principles: the establishment of an objective, the selection of characteristics which, when incorporated into a crop plant, will attain the goal, the selection of a new combination of characteristics in a plant, and, finally, the increase of this plant into a population of plants (a variety) having the desired properties.

This process is similar in all crops. For example, Delta soybeans are subject to a serious disease with a difficult name, *phytophthora*. Potatoes are often attacked by a similar fungus disease, such an occurrence resulting in a wide-spread famine in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century.

Suppose we have a desirable soybean variety, but it is susceptible to *phytophthora*. We cross, or hybridize, it with a

Continued on page 25

Historic Architecture in the Delta

by Mary Wallace Crocker

Although the Delta is rich in history and tradition, there are surprisingly few antebellum homes in this area, primarily because of the ever-present danger of flooding. This is certainly not to say there are no antebellum structures in the Delta. In her book, Historic Architecture in Mississippi, Mary Wallace Crocker has a section on Horn Lake, Carrollton, and Washington County from which the article on Carrollton, reprinted below, was taken.

In her introduction to the book, Dr. Crocker points out many of the external factors which have influenced the entire state's architecture. For example, Mississippi has what is considered to be a moderate climate; therefore, steep roofs were not needed to prevent snow build-up. Porches shaded the walls of the houses as

well as providing a cool place to sit and relax. They also made it possible to leave windows and doors open during rainy weather.

Homes with the main floor on the second level were popular because of the flood problem and because this allowed air to pass under the house and cool it. There was a belief that yellow fever was associated with the soil and that living higher up was healthier.

Since oak and pine trees grow in most areas of Mississippi, these were the building materials used in the majority of the homes. Many of the furnishings and some of the building materials such as slate for roofs and marble for mantels were imported.

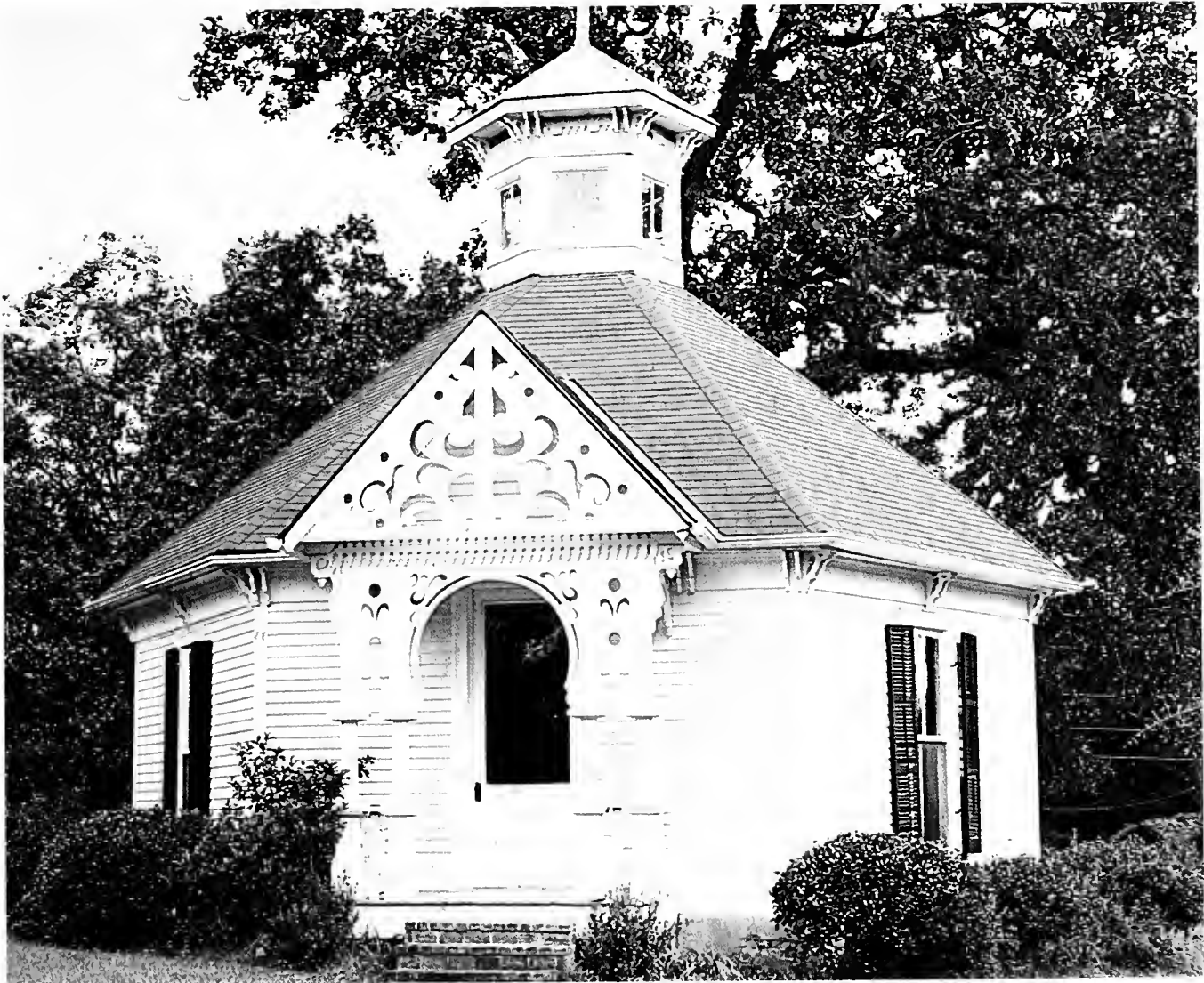
The main thrust of building in the Delta did not come until the mid-1800s. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians ceded their lands to the United States in the

1830s, opening up development in the northern part of the state. Levees that lessened the danger of flooding were constructed in the 1850s.

Carrollton

In 1833 Carroll County was established in an area that had belonged to the Choctaw Indians. The town of Carrollton, incorporated two years later, is located on rolling hills at the edge of the Delta, making it a desirable place for planters to live.

The styles of the houses in Carrollton are similar to those in Oxford and Columbus with the mansions (Cotesworth and Malmaison) being two-story wooden structures without architectural



Cotesworth office photo by M.W. Crocker

orders. Cottages are more plentiful, and, like the cottages in Columbus, many are decorated with brackets, ornamental posts, and wooden spandrels. Stanhope, Helm House, and the Ray home are three fine cottages in Carrollton that are attributed to architect James Clark Harris, who is known primarily for his design of Malmaison for Greenwood Leflore, Choctaw Chieftain. Malmaison (destroyed by fire) was definitely a mansion, but, like the cottages, was ornamented with brackets.

Since at least six buildings in the small town of Carrollton have been attributed to Harris, the architect was instrumental in establishing the picturesque appearance of the small town. Unlike many historic areas in the United States, Carrollton has not been restored — it has been

beautifully maintained.

When a film crew was searching for a turn-of-the-century location to film a movie based on William Faulkner's novel **The Reivers**, Carrollton was selected. It was said "... the film company had little to do other than cover the streets with sand and build a false front around one service station to create an atmosphere of seventy years ago."

There are numerous historic markers erected in the Carroll County vicinity that refer to the site of Malmaison, the home of Choctaw Chief Greenwood Leflore. The house was destroyed by fire but the site is a historic landmark because of the importance of Leflore.

Malmaison

Greenwood Leflore was the son of the French trader Louis Lefleur and Rebecca Crevat, niece

of Choctaw Chief Pushmataha. In 1824 Greenwood Leflore was elected chief of the Choctaws. He supported the sale of the Choctaw lands to the United States but had the agreement amended whereby any Choctaw desiring to remain in the state would receive a section of land and protection from the government. Leflore remained in Carroll County and became a large cotton planter and a statesman. By mid-nineteenth century he had amassed a fortune. He secured the services of architect James Clark Harris (who later became his son-in-law) to plan a mansion for him.

The large-scale house had two stories with four porticos and an attached wing. Decorative brackets, pilasters, iron balconies, and a cupola that afforded a view of the surrounding area ornamented the

Photos of Cotesworth (center) and Malmaison (bottom) by Mary Wallace Crocker. Photo of downtown Carrollton (right) by Noel Workman.



house.

The interior featured cross halls with heavy millwork. According to local history the furnishings, including hand-painted window shades and an aubusson carpet in the parlor, were imported from France.

Leflore's leadership was recognized by the non-Indian population also. He was elected to serve terms in both the state house of representatives and the senate. Leflore was independent and steadfast in his beliefs. During the War Between the States the United States flag flew over Malmaison.

Cotesworth

Cotesworth was the home of another important Mississippi statesman, J.Z. George, who was instrumental in framing the constitution of Mississippi. The senator was a lawyer who maintained an office to the left of the Carroll County Courthouse. The office is now used as the headquarters for the Carrollton Pilgrimage.

According to family history, Cotesworth was initially an inn located on the stagecoach line to Grenada. Senator George purchased the property in 1847 and enlarged the structure to meet the needs of his family of nine children. He named the house for his friend Judge Cotesworth P. Smith.

Cotesworth, like many houses built in the South, is a two-story building fronted with tall columns. The facade is ornamented with dentils on the cornice and above the windows and doors. The double-hung windows on the first floor are floor length. Decorative iron grillwork outlines the cantilevered balcony.

Entry into the wide central hallway is through double doors framed with side lights and pilasters. A simple stairway rises from the right side of the hall to lead to four bedrooms upstairs. Large parlors are located on opposite sides of the first-floor hallway. Behind the parlors are smaller rooms with the dining room on the left and a bedroom on the right. A back gallery spans the house and connects with a

short breezeway to the kitchen.

On the right side of the house is another breezeway that connects the main house to a room with galleries that was built by Senator George for an office. The office proved to be too accessible to the family; consequently in 1860 he built the hexagon-shaped law library a short distance from the house.

There are at least three octagonal buildings in the state (Longwood in Natchez; Sullivan Cottage in Ocean Springs; Mon Amour in Horn Lake), but this is the only hexagonal building that the author knows about in the state. The interior has a marbleized mantel on the wall opposite the entry. Windows are located on each side of the fireplace. Additional light is obtained from single windows on four sides, a half-glass door on the sixth side, and six windows in the dome. A bookshelf originates from each of the six corners and advances toward the center of the room. The area under the dome is left open. The boards for the floor in

this area are laid to repeat the hexagonal shape.

The source for the design of this building is not known. Orson S. Fowler and Samuel Sloan had published articles and design books advocating the octagonal form for houses, and Andrew J. Downing had included a hexagonal gate house in one of his publications. These writings advocating the angular form for buildings had been very popular the decade immediately preceding the construction of the law library. The paired brackets and the decorative posts are similar to those on buildings in the vicinity that are attributed to architect James Clark Harris.

Senator George left Cotesworth to his son, W.C. George, with the stipulation that it be left with someone in good standing in the Baptist Church. W.C. George left the house to his sister, Mrs. Lizzie George Henderson, who in time left the house to her brother, Mr. J.W. George, who was the father and grandfather of the present owners. For a number of years the

house was left furnished but unoccupied. The house and office were never broken into.

The present owners (Mrs. M.P. Saunders and Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Williams, Jr.) expanded the house by adding a kitchen and family room to the rear of the original kitchen. The house is now a big, rambling, comfortable home with a variety of galleries, balconies, breezeways, and patios where one can sit and enjoy the beauty of nature on the surrounding acreage.

Mary Wallace Crocker is an Associate Professor of Housing at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Prior to joining Texas Tech University, she was on the faculty of Mississippi University for Women in Columbus. Dr. Wallace received her B.S.E. degree from Delta State University, her M.A. degree from the University of Mississippi, and her Ph.D. from Florida State University. She is an authority on antebellum architecture in the South and has received wide acclaim for her Historic Architecture in Mississippi.

Reprinted with permission from Historic Architecture in Mississippi by Mary Wallace Crocker.

At Bolivar Insurance Agency we offer more than just a friendly face.

Bolivar Insurance Agency has been serving the insurance needs of Bolivar County and the Delta since 1907, so we know how to go about helping our customers when they need us. We've built our reputation on prompt, courteous service. Come talk to us and see just what we can do for you.

Bolivar Insurance Agency, Inc.

Ned Mitchell, CPCU, president
843-2747 Commerce Building Cleveland



THE SILVER LINING HAS A NEW LOOK!

**We've made some interesting changes
in our store to make shopping at the
Silver Lining more convenient and
pleasurable for our customers.**

**We couldn't be more pleased with our
new spring and summer lines that are
arriving daily. And we're sure you will
be too!**

**Do come by and check out our new
look; and let us help you plan your
new look for spring!**

**THE SILVER LINING
Delta Sunflower Square
Clarksdale**



Beavers & Beaver Dam Lake

by Charles S. Conner

The oxbow lake is as symbolic of the Delta landscape as is a cotton field. These bow-shaped lakes were formed by the Mississippi River many years ago — before the existence of the levee system as we know it — and today these U-shaped lakes with their cypress-lined shoals border the river frontage of the Mississippi Delta. Each oxbow lake is unique and exists in silent testimony to the power of the River and the lands it once covered.

Beaver Dam Lake in Tunica County is such an oxbow lake. Its open water area is approximately two or three hundred acres, with several hundred more acres in flooded timber and backwaters. Contrary to its name, Beaver Dam Lake has no principal beaver dam to hold back the waters of the lake, but let there be no doubt — the lake has its share of beavers.

Most of Beaver Dam Lake is, and has been, owned by the Owen family for the past one-hundred years. The land around the lake is as good as any land in the Delta and is farmed intensively. However, in some areas the beaver has gained more ground than the plow. John Owen, one of the principal owners, noted several specific areas where the beavers were gaining ground with every rainfall. The struggle of the Delta farmer with the problem of drainage is as old as the land left by the recession of the waters, and it has become even more complicated due to the presence of the beaver.

In order to concentrate on this problem of poor drainage compounded by the large beaver population, the landowners around Beaver Dam Lake formed the Beaver Dam Improvement Association in February of 1974. Their main concern at the time was the drainage of farmland adjacent to the lake. They hoped to secure financing for this project and to be able to develop a plan which would lead to better drainage. Due to the problems involved in the use of federal monies, the landowners' cause was soon lost and little was accomplished. To say the least, the effect on the beaver population resulting from the formation and dissolution of the Association was marginal. They (i.e. the beavers) didn't seem too concerned and continued just to let the trees fall where they may.

The central issue concerning Beaver Dam Lake, and many other lakes in the Mississippi Delta, evolves from the fight for some semblance of ecological balance. On the plus side, lake water purity hasn't been affected by the herbicides or poisons used in farming. Several years ago there was an isolated fish kill, but after water samples from the lake were analyzed no trace of harmful toxicants was found. In addition, John Owen mentioned his concern about the low quail population on lands surrounding the lake to a state biologist. However, after thoroughly investigating the matter, the biologist could find no specific reasons why the number of quail was not larger. Again, there seemed to be no problem relating to herbicides or poisons used in farming.

Just one look at Beaver Dam Lake reveals that it provides the best in natural habitat for waterfowl, in clean open waters, and in cypress with thick button willow in the backwaters. Moreover, it's an ideal stopover for the ducks and geese that migrate the Mississippi Flyway. Around the turn of the century, Beaver Dam Lake was the site of a very exclusive hunting club, the Beaver Dam Hunting Club, which was frequented by the late Nash

Buckingham, a noted outdoorsman. In the "good ole days," some have said, during the hunting season ducks and geese would be so thick on the lake that it was impossible to sleep in the club house due to the noise. Undoubtedly the beaver is the best friend a duck or goose ever had, and both have prospered on Beaver Dam Lake. It wasn't so long ago that the Wood Duck was protected in Mississippi by law, and on Beaver Dam Lake Sterling Owen is building Wood Duck houses to make sure this beautiful species of waterfowl will survive and prosper. It's hoped that similar concern can be generated among interested groups such as the Boy Scouts to construct and erect more houses for Wood Ducks. The beavers have agreed to do their part to keep Beaver Dam Lake a suitable reststop for ducks and geese, if the Good Lord will continue to provide the rain.

This current battle for ecological balance on Beaver Dam Lake still involves "give and take." Man takes a few beavers in an effort to control the beaver population, while the beavers give man a few more acres of flooded timber. It's that simple. The bad news for the landowner is that the beavers aren't losing, and more effort will be required just to keep cultivable land cultivable. But once there was a master plan for the drastic reduction of the beaver population. The only uncomfortable detail about this plan was that it involved alligators. This type of eradication program had been used with some degree of success in other areas and seemed to be a good idea to some of the landowners around Beaver Dam Lake.

Upon request, authorities at Overton Park Zoo in Memphis agreed to provide the alligators for the proposed beaver eradication program. However, the more the idea was discussed, the less feasible it seemed to be although the plan was quite simple. Alligators would be placed in Beaver Dam Lake and their appetites subsequently would eliminate the beavers. The proposal sounded workable, but op-

position soon began to increase.

What about the swimmers and fishermen who used the lake? Wouldn't they, not the beavers, be the ones in the greatest danger? The liabilities for such action could be much greater than anyone had anticipated and the plan was dropped.

Today, except possibly for the beavers, every effort is being made to maintain things much as they've always been around Beaver Dam Lake. There has been little change relative to housing along the perimeter of the lake. Tunica County has rural zoning ordinances, and all the land around the lake is zoned for agricultural use. Moreover, it's doubtful that any additional housing would be permitted even if the land wasn't zoned. The land in and around Beaver Dam Lake, in the opinion of John Owen, is priceless. Besides, who can really say in this day and time what good land in the Delta is worth, much less what it might be worth in five or ten years. With or without the beavers, land is the only thing the Good Lord isn't making any more.

The big cypress trees that outline the perimeter of the lake still gracefully mark the shores of this magnificent oxbow lake much as they've done for the past century. The water level in the lake is higher now, and that's been attributed to the beavers and the slower drainage they've caused, especially the backwater areas. Other than that, things around the lake have changed but little, and those who live there like it that way.

Just the other day someone brought news that some of the beavers were moving to higher ground, to a slough in the middle of a soybean field. Maybe that's what we call progress, at least for the beavers of Beaver Dam Lake.

Charles S. Conner is a resident of Memphis, Tennessee, where he currently is a corporation Operations Manager. He received his B.B.A. degree from the University of Mississippi. Mr. Conner is an avid outdoorsman and is vitally concerned about wildlife conservation and management.

Miss Luna's Private Ghost

by Ellen Orr

Miss Luna Lee made her debut in Charleston, and the year is none of your business. The courthouse records burned in 1911. Her papa was a cousin to the General, and if you know what the Yankees did to South Carolina, you can see why he married the only child of a Delta planter with more land than Carter had oats. (You may remember that in his day Carter was a big grain man from way back.)

Miss Luna's papa was a quick man with figures, so, with the rest of his contemporaries, he hired the convicts at \$1.00 a day and meals to clear the land. Fighting moccasins, mosquitoes, wildcats, and bears, he put a bodacious lot of acres into cultivation, and out of cypress he built this mansion. He was a good man with figures, as I've said, but not too smart about architecture. He vaguely remembered his granddaddy's Charleston house, before the Yankees burned it, but he was confused about details.

Then, too, he was a romantic. He liked piazzas (a piazza is a porch, Geraldine), so he had four, and I mean clear around the thirty-eight room house. He was fond of magnolias and he transplanted them so thick you could smell the place before you could see it when they were in bloom.

Well, Miss Luna made her debut. Then her papa "ceased" and they planted him in the Indian mound on the "back 40." Miss Luna took her papa's bunch of keys and she shut and locked all the upstairs rooms, and fixed up a handy apartment downstairs. Then she took over the plantation. Everybody said she was born fifty

years too late, that it she'd been helping the General the South would never have lost that war.

While her papa had been good with figures and romantic too, he had caught the Delta fever, and every time he had a good crop year, he paid a bonus to the folks on the place.

One year it was rolling cultivators; each man on each 40 acres had one. The next year it was riding cultivators. One year it was double-seated buggies with fringe around the tops so they could ride easy-like to church on pastoral days. Then one year it was Whippet automobiles. Each man on each 40 acres had a Whippet. There was a stretch of road up to the Mount Zion Church house that was littered with wrecked Whip-pets. They ran off the road into the bayou, hit trees that wouldn't move out of the way, jumped bridges, and backed into each other at the church house.

So first thing, Miss Luna said no more Whip-pets: use 'em up, wear 'em out, make 'em do, but NO MORE WHIPPETS!

Well, you know yourself you can't hold progress back in the Delta, that the kids who rode Whip-pets to the church house were the first ones to want tractors instead of mules. A Whippet and a tractor have a lot in common — they don't have horse sense. And they can't stand gumbo mud. Miss Luna kept a barn full of mules to help pull tractors out when they'd disappear from sight during spring plowing. But the plantation finally mechanized, and Miss Luna Lee was known far and wide as a good Delta planter.

Her sweetheart (he was from the North, and she'd met him in Charleston) had long ago given up

trying to compete with a plantation. Anyway, that was before air conditioning, and he just couldn't endure the South during summer. You know yourself that the summer is when the crop is made.

His last visit was memorable. He came determined to reclaim his diamond. That night, coming in tired from a long, hot trip, he started to get ready for bed in the downstairs guest room. He heard someone going up the stairs.

"Luna!" he called across the hall. "Who's that?"

"Who's what?" Miss Luna answered, sticking her head out of her door and yawning mightily.

"Who just went upstairs? I thought you locked everything up."

"Nobody went upstairs," grumbled Miss Luna. "You just heard the timbers settling. All old houses have settling timbers." She shut her door and turned off the light.

Then, he heard a door open upstairs. The hinges creaked, thirsty for oil. The door closed.

He opened his door and looked up the dark stairs. Nobody. Nothing. Not even a light. He locked his door, put a chair back under the knob, and started to say his prayers. Half way through them, he heard someone sit down on the upstairs bed. Nobody could mistake the sound of those old springs. He decided he could pray as well, or better, if he just hopped into bed. So hop he did, pulling the counterpane over his head.

A moment later he heard someone drop a shoe. Upstairs. A long deep silence. Then, thump, another shoe. He put his head under the pillow, a very fat feather one. But he could still hear someone up there lay full weight,

down on the bed, springs creaking like mad. Then, a heavy, tired sigh; finally, two centuries later, some all-time champion snoring. Upstairs.

Miss Luna's fiance from up North didn't sleep worth a hoot, and he didn't rest worth two hoots and a whipporwill. Next morning he got up early and dressed. Tipping out into the hall, he looked up the stairs. No trace of traveling, just dust, until he made tracks himself going up. Trembling, he put a hand on the doorknob. It was locked, but the key was on the outside. Nervously, he turned it, and the door opened as if it were on ball bearings! No noise at all. There were no shoes on the floor. And there was no form sleeping on the bed. But there was a dent in the middle of that bed!

"Who's sleeping in that bed upstairs?" he asked Miss Luna at breakfast as he lapped up strawberry preserves (made by the sunshine method as in Charleston) and hot biscuits.

"Nobody," said Miss Luna as she

put another slab of ham on his plate, laddled out the grits, and placed two eggs to the side. Then she poured him some Southern "sludge and wudge" coffee (strong enough to float a sledge and wedge, Geraldine, in case you don't speak Delta).

"Nobody?"

"Nobody." Her manner was a calm as a bayou on a still day. A bayou, you know, is an unambitious body of water. It isn't going anywhere. And it doesn't really care. Miss Luna's sweetheart from up North looked at her, and he couldn't read her anymore than you can see to the bottom of the bayou.

He caught the next train north without kissing Miss Luna goodbye. Without the diamond.

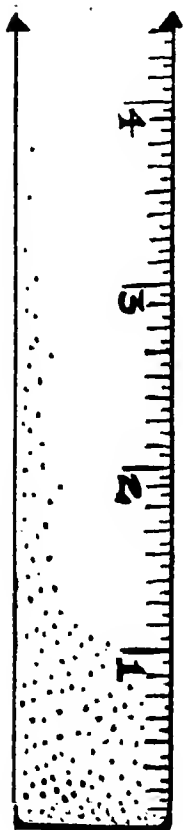
Sometimes when the crop is up to a good stand, and when the tractors are humming up and down the mile-long rows, you see Miss Luna sitting out there on the turnrow in her 1965 Thunderbird. And you may catch the gleam of that diamond in the southern summer sun. She has a good head

for figures, too, and more than once that diamond has kept the sheriff or the bank from foreclosing the mortgage in bad crop years. A diamond that big is much better than crop insurance, so let's not make a federal case out of Miss Luna's ghost!

When she mechanized the plantation, she mechanized the house, too. There's a row of buttons in her bedroom. Push one, and the lights go on out by the carport. Push another, and a buzzer sounds in any tractor driver's house she chooses (replaces the old bell, you see).

But Miss Luna never told anybody about how she mechanized that ghost!

Ellen Orr is the pen name of Mrs. T. A. Hester of Shelby. A recipient of the B.A. degree in English and French from William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Ms. Orr also attended the University of Missouri School of Journalism and numerous summer seminars in creative writing. Currently, she is co-partner with her husband in Bolivar County farming interests, director of Hester Engineering Services, and a columnist for the Bolivar Commercial and the Delta Farm Press.



**If your bank doesn't quite measure
up, maybe you should see the
friendly folks at . . .**

THE VALLEY BANK
the little better bank

Rosedale Cleveland Gunnison Pace

Delta Scenes

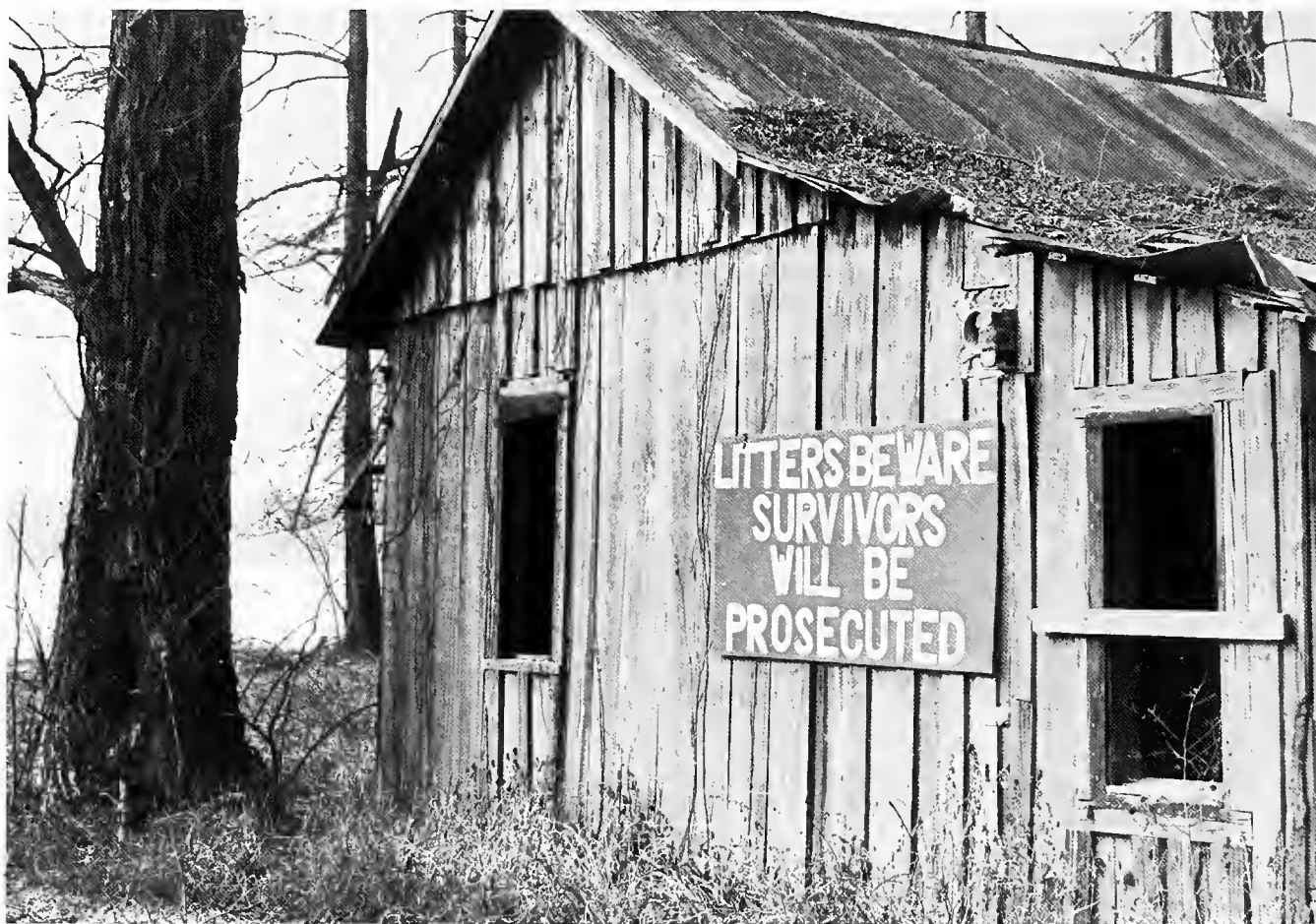


Photo by Cindy Dixon

The spelling might not be the best in the world (we think "litters" means "litterers"), but the author certainly has no trouble getting his point across. Anyone who makes the mistake of littering around Sparky's Camp at Tunica Cutoff had better be ready to accept the consequences!

Something
for Nothing

(including the phone call to learn all about it)

At **Travel Unlimited**, you don't pay for our services. The airlines pay us . . . and the steamship companies, car rental firms, hotels, cruise and tour operators. For you, this means hassle-free travel at absolutely no added cost.

And by special arrangement with the phone company, your direct dial call to us within 55 miles of Greenville is billed to our phone, not yours. Just another service from the travel agency that prides itself on the best service in the Delta.

TRAVELUNLIMITED

Greenville Mall, Hwy. 1 South
P.O. Box 606, Greenville, MS 38701
TOLL FREE 1-378-2323

Continued from page 15

variety which is resistant to the disease. The offspring of this cross will contain individuals which are resistant and others which are susceptible. The problem is to tell which is which. In this case, the easiest way to solve the problem is to expose all individuals in the population to the disease. Understandably, those that die are susceptible, and the survivors are resistant. However, the problem is further complicated by the fact that the survivors contain resistant individuals insofar as phytophthora is concerned, but they may have all the range of combinations of good and bad characteristics of the parents.

Selections for the outstanding individual, or individuals, take place in succeeding generations through field, greenhouse, and laboratory testing until an outstanding strain is identified. Once such a strain is isolated, it is given the distinction of a variety name and is increased for subsequent distribution to farmers. These, then, are the steps necessary to

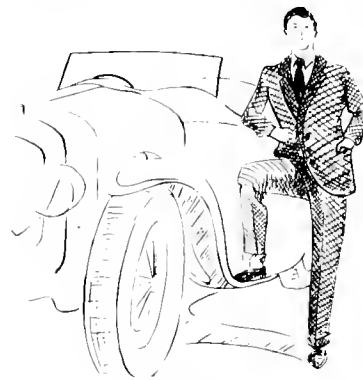
develop the specifications for an improved new variety, that is, establishing the objective, creating a population which probably contains the desired plant, selecting the parents and making the cross, examining the progeny and selecting desirable individuals, screening for phytophthora in the greenhouse plus in field and laboratory testing, and finally increasing and distributing the new variety.

This process takes considerable time, usually a minimum of eight to ten years to a maximum of twenty or thirty years for a very difficult problem. For example, we at D and PL began working to develop a new soybean variety in 1970, and the first Deltapine Soybean will be ready for farmers to plant in 1980.

Recently, there have been striking examples of advances made in crop production. Of outstanding importance is the so-called "Green Revolution." The work of a wheat breeder, Dr. Norman Borlaug, increased food

Continued on page 26

Clothes for men who are going places



for gentlemen of the delta



CLARKSDALE



CITY OF CLARKSDALE

Forward with progress
backed by a tradition
of excellence

CITY HALL
POST OFFICE BOX 940
CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI 38614

RICHARD M. WEBSTER JR., Mayor
COMMISSIONERS:
GRADY PALMER
THOMAS E. GARMON
HENRY W. ESPY, JR.
RICHARD WEISS

sponsored by
Clarksdale Water & Light Department



JOHNSON IMPLEMENT COMPANY

Good Equipment
Makes A
Good Farmer
Better

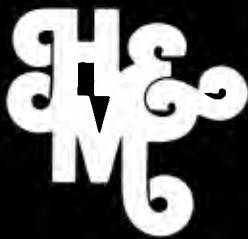
Post Office Box 926
601-453-6525
Highway 82 West
Greenwood, MS 38930

BANK OF ANGUILLA



A Financial Pryamid of the Delta Since 1904

Anguilla • Rolling Fork • Cary



Hammons and
Martin Advertising
THE WHITTINGTON BUILDING
PHONE 453-7078
GREENWOOD, MS 38930

Continued from page 25

production world-wide through the development of a truly revolutionary wheat variety with a tremendous production capacity. Through a dramatic increase of food supplies, Dr. Borlang made a tremendous contribution to world peace, and for this achievement he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In reference to similar achievements closer to home, the Delta's cotton production was threatened in the late 1950's and early 1960's by the rapid spread of the verticillium wilt disease, which made its heaviest inroads on our best cotton land. Due to the development of improved varieties by dedicated plant breeders, verticillium wilt is no longer a serious problem to Mid-South cotton farmers.

So the next time you sit down to a meal, think about the fact that it's more tasty and nutritious because of the plant breeder, and more abundant and affordable because of the farmer who grew it. Your attractive and comfortable cotton clothing is also available because of the efforts of the same people.

The American farmer does indeed serve you three times a day or more!

Early C. Ewing, Jr., of Scott is Vice President and Director of Research at Delta and Pine Land Company. He received his B.S. degree from Mississippi State University and his M.S. degree in agriculture from Cornell University. An authority in plant breeding, he has contributed articles to numerous technical journals and farm papers.

Mrs. Kathryn Litton
Rt. 2, Shaw, MS 38773

Licensed Landscape Designer-Consultant

For all your landscape needs
Lawn Problems • Trees • Shrubs

Day
843-5044
Cleveland, MS

Call

Night
754-6140
Shaw, MS

Continued from page 13
Nowadays he can buy you a truck load."

"The bestest thing about all this money," says Clower, "is now I can afford to do for my friends."

Jerry's "friends" include a slew of folks he never met. He tells of how "the Lord convicted me not to be a racial bigot." Not necessarily a popular stand with some of the country music fans who buy his records. But that don't slow him down none from doin' what he thinks right.

When Jerry learns that a Georgia civic club has dropped its scholarship award following integration of the public schools, he personally puts up the money for the scholarship to continue.

And he's as generous with time as he is with money. Backstage after a Saturday night Opry someone hands him a note. Asking the visiting congressman's family and the newsmen to wait "jest one liddle minute friends," he goes to meet with the widow of a fellow Gideon worker. Despite the fact that it had been ten years since

he'd seen the man, Jerry takes time to share with widow a few memories of better days.

Some folks might say, well, Jerry Clower can afford to be generous, all that money he's pullin' in. But the seasons weren't always so kind.

"I grew up poor," admits Jerry. "There was time I would'a eat a little more if I'd had it. It was rough.

"But as I look back on those days and tell stories about 'em and put it all on a record, whoo-ee, it's been good.

"So if you're despondent and somethin's happenin' in your life you don't think's particularly good—CHEER UP—'cause you may make a record about it down the road!"

And there's the key to Clower Power. Ole Jerry do love life and here he goes again, a-suckin' you up in the corners of his grin.

Reprinted with special permission from GROW MAGAZINE, published by Mississippi Chemical Corporation.

WEST IMPLEMENT CO., INC.

John Deere Agricultural Equipment



"Nothing runs
like a Deere"

Cleveland, MS.



"Greenville 1925"

by Tom Glasco, Jr.

23" x 35"

500 signed and numbered
time limited edition

Current price, \$15.00
effective May 1, \$25.00

Greenville Art Gallery

(601) 378-8675

Mainstream Mall

Greenville, MS

Your fashion

Headquarters...

women's apparel...

gifts and

antiques

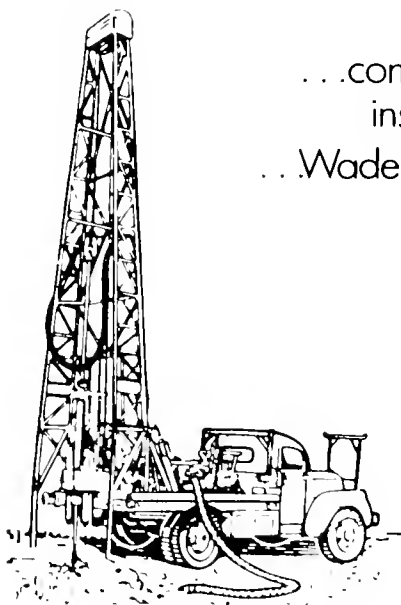
XYLDA'S SHOP

601-363-1441

Post Office Box 1076

Tunica, Mississippi 38676

Butane Gas Company of Greenwood



...complete water systems
installation and service
...Wade rain sprinkler systems
...irrigation wells

...we offer
lock and key
irrigation
systems

453-5511

Hwy 49-82 bypass

Greenwood, MS

Continued from page 10
headquarters in Natchez for punishment. Gayoso was consistently interested in Fort Nogales' functionings, for he considered it absolutely vital to Spain's position in the lower Mississippi Valley.

In keeping with Gayoso's feelings regarding Fort Nogales, it was heavily fortified. Barracks were built to house up to 200 soldiers, although an average of only about eighty troops manned the fort between 1792 and 1798. During this six-year-span, the three forts and the various walls and trenches of fortifications were kept in excellent condition, with extensive repairs being carried out in 1795 and 1797. In the nearby settlement of Los Nogales, there was an average of sixteen inhabitants; however, numerous people lived in the surrounding area.

Thus, it appeared that the Spaniards had established a firm foothold on the Mississippi River with Fort Nogales and Los Nogales. But once again inter-

Continued on page 30

Cool thoughts for a warm day . . .



Brought to you by
MAINSTREAM TRAVEL AGENCY
Dependable service for over 11 years.

308 Washington

Greenville

378-8974



photo by Cindy Dixon

Gourmet Guide

VENETIAN CAFE

by Cindy Dixon

If you're driving through Greenville, Mississippi, chances are you won't pass by the Venetian Cafe. And if you did happen to go by the Venetian, you probably wouldn't stop. But what a treat you're missing!

Rose Powell, the owner of the Venetian, and her mother, Irene Barcato, serve Italian food like grandmother used to make. That is, if granny happened to be Italian and brought her recipes with her to this country from Naples, Italy, because that's how Rose got the recipes that have made her restaurant famous.

Feeding their families was the only cooking "experience" Rose and her mother had before they opened the restaurant, so all they were familiar with was good old home cooking Italian style and that's what they serve.

"Opening the restaurant was really a spur of the moment thing," Rose admitted recently while seated in the small main dining room of the Venetian. "Mother owned this building and we had all my grandmother's recipes, so I thought opening a restaurant would be a good idea."

The building that now houses the Venetian had been owned by Rose's family since "before the flood" (that's the Greenville flood of 1927). Prior to becoming a restaurant, the small white frame building was a neighborhood grocery store operated by a

combination grocer and bicycle repairman. Today there are no signs of the previous occupant. The decor is homespun Italian with red-checked tablecloths topped by colorful wax candles. The main restaurant area has tables for thirty-six and five bar stools. A small private dining room can accommodate up to fourteen.

And it's just as much a family operation as it was when the doors first opened in the fall of 1957. Rose and her mother, now 79, still cook all the Italian food they serve. If they need help, they can call on Rose's husband, her two sisters, her son-in-law or her brother-in-law, all Venetian employees.

"This is just a small family restaurant run by my family," Rose said. "We're in a quiet part of town and haven't ever had any trouble with our customers."

For the first couple of years the Venetian's clientele consisted mostly of men from the nearby military base. They were such faithful customers that little room was left for the townspeople.

"After the base closed, more and more people from the Greenville area started stopping by," Rose said. "They had heard about the restaurant from friends and wanted to give it a try."

Although the Venetian Cafe has never advertised, it did receive a "plug" recently on national television. A man from Jackson

(Rose never found out his name) stopped by the Venetian to eat. A few weeks later her nephew saw the same man on the Johnny Carson Show. He told Johnny to be sure to go to the Venetian the next time he was in Greenville because "there's a little Italian momma there that serves super food."

There are few shortcuts when you prepare real Italian home-cooked meals, and Rose is at the Venetian every morning by 9:30 even though the restaurant doesn't open for business until 5:00.

"I cook until we open at 5:00," Rose said. "Some of the sauces have to be cooked for at least five hours. The only thing we don't make here ourselves is the bread. I don't even know how to make Italian bread."

The prices at the Venetian are reasonable, especially when you consider the time that's spent on every dish. Pizzas, the restaurant's speciality, range from \$1.75 for a plain pizza up to \$2.75 for a pizza known as "Ron's Special" that has double cheese and pepperoni. (Ron was a salesman who frequented the Venetian and always ordered a "double.") Rigatoni or shell macaroni and meat balls is \$2.75 and veal scallopini is \$3.50. The most expensive item on the menu is steak for those who can resist the Italian foods. Hamburgers and french fries are also offered to keep the kids happy.

Hours are from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. The family takes a rest on Mondays.

"I'm happy with the restaurant just the way it is," Rose said looking contentedly around the small dining area. "I wouldn't want to change it or move it somewhere else. All you really need is good food to be successful. If the food is good and people know about it, they'll come."

As long as the Venetian has grandmother's recipes, mother's help in the kitchen and Rose's ingenuity and drive, it's doubtful that the restaurant will lack customers because it sure does have good food!

DELTA SCENE MAGAZINE
P.O. Box B-3 DSU
Cleveland, MS 38732

1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐
\$3.50 \$6.00 \$10.00

name _____

address _____

city _____

state _____ zip _____

Like what you just read? Subscribe now! Four times a year Delta Scene will bring the people, the colors, the land, the very essence of this special region called the Delta into your home. Don't miss a single issue!

